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7 OCT 80

BUNOS AIRES

TELEGRAM

INDICATE
☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TO

FROM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

12065

EO 12812

TAGS

SUBJECT(U) THE SLACK MECHANICS OF THE VIOLA SELECTION

ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7030/31

INFO: Amembassy ASUNCION 5225/26
Amembassy BRASILIA 4317/18
Amembassy LA PAZ 4063/64
Amembassy LIMA 3710/11
Amembassy MONTEVIDEO 6793/94
Amembassy SANTIAGO 4960/61
DIA WASHDC
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS

CHARGE-
A/DCM
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ECON
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ICA
SCI
MILGP
CHRON

CONFIDENTIAL BUENOS AIRES 8061

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 7874; (B) BUENOS AIRES 7991

1. (C- ENTIRE TEXT)

2. ARGENTINES PASSED A LOVELY SPRING WEEKEND, HX WHICH
THE OCT. 3
ADDED TO THE NATIONAL ~~EEEEEE~~ SENSE OF RELIEF THAT ~~EEEEEE~~
ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE
HURRY-UP/DESIGNATION OF A NEW PRESIDENT FOR THE 1981-84
PERIOD HAD AVERTED A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS OF SORTS. EVEN
THE CRITICS IN LABOR AND ~~POLITICAL~~ SECTORS APPEARED ON
THE WHOLE PLEASED THAT THE ABRUPT DETOUR IN THE MILITARY
JUNTA'S "PROCESS" OF GOVERNMENT -- HOWEVER BRIEF IT WAS
ORIGINALLY ANNOUNCED TO BE -- WAS RATHER QUICKLY ABANDONED
WITH FRIDAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT RETIRED LGEN ROBERTO VIOLA

DRAFTED BY:

ADCM/JKing:scg *VKing*

DRAFTING DATE

5/10/80

TEL EXT

200

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY:

CHARGE/CWRuser

CLEARANCES:

DAO/COLPitt *ARW*

POL/CSCHUBERT *CS*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLASSIFICATION

OPTIONAL FORM 153
(Formerly FD-413)
January 1975

MBN

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[NAMED SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THAT DATE, I.E., SEPT. 29, 1980.]

4X IT SEEMS THAT AT ABOUT THE TIME THE JUNTA WAS ANNOUNCING ITS NON-DECISION ON VIOLA, HIS OLD FRIEND ~~MR~~ VIDELA, THE PRESIDENT, DECIDED TO PASS UP A LUNCHEON THAT DAY WITH THE JUNTA'S THREE BRANCH COMMANDERS. THIS UNUSUAL SNUB, THE WORD WAS DULY PUT ABOUT, STEMMED FROM THE JUNTA'S LACK OF UNANIMITY, AGAIN A PREREQUISITE ACCORDING TO ITS OWN RULES, ON SELECTION OF A SUCCEEDING PRESIDENT. SOON THEREAFTER IT CAME TO PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THAT VIDELA WAS LUNCHING THE FOLLOWING DAY, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 1, WITH VIOLA, ALONE. [TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION THAT SNUB- TUESDAY'S NAME OF THE JUNTA BECAME WEDNESDAY'S OPEN INSULT,] VIDELA'S PEOPLE [AGAIN] DUTIFULLY PUT ABOUT THE WORD THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS EXERCISING STATEMANSHIP, AND NOT ENGAGING IN PETTY CRONYISM, BECAUSE HE BELIEVED VIOLA WAS THE ONLY WORTHY CHOICE TO FOLLOW HIM IN OFFICE, AND THAT THE DELAY IN HIS NOMINATION WAS DAMAGING TO THE INSTITUTION OF THE MILITARY PRESIDENCY. BESIDES, IT WAS NOT NECESSARY TO SAY, VIDELA WAS CONFIDENT HE HAD THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND BEHIND HIM.

6. [ANYWAY] THIS POLITICAL LUNCHMANSHIP, TOGETHER WITH A MUFFLED STORM OF PUBLIC CRITICISM, APPEARED SUFFICIENT TO SHAKE THE JUNTA INTO BELATED RECOGNITION THAT INACTION [ONLY] HURT THEM [AS INDIVIDUALS] AND RAISED LARGE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HALLOWED IF LARGELY UNEXPLAINED "PROCESS" WHICH

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OPTIONAL FORM 182a(H)
(Formerly FS-413(H)a)
January 1978
Dept. of State

7. AS FOR THE ISSUES UNDERLYING THE DELAY, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF HYPOTHESES CIRCULATING IN THIS CITY -- NO ONE KNOWS WITH CERTAINTY AT THIS POINT WHICH IS ~~CORRECT~~ ~~CURRENT~~ -- BUT THEY BASICALLY REDUCE TO TWO GENERIC EXPLANATIONS:

HYPOTHESES A: THE POWERS OF THE NEXT PRESIDENT: ACCORDING TO A NUMBER OF MILITARY SOURCES, VIOLA WANTED MORE FREEDOM OF ACTION THAN THE JUNTA WAS PREPARED TO GIVE. WHAT EXACTLY THIS MEANS WE ARE NOT ENTIRELY SURE, I.E. WHETHER VIOLA OBJECTED TO A SET OF GENERAL GUIDELINES FORMULATED BY THE JUNTA OR WHETHER THE JUNTA SOUGHT ASSURANCES OR GUARANTEES ON SOME SPECIFIC ISSUE OR SET OF ISSUES. HOWEVER, MOST OF THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF SENIOR JUNTA MEMBERS (E.G. GRAFFIGNA) IN RECENT WEEKS HAVE LAID HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE CONTINUITY OF THE PROCESS AND ON THE CONTINUING UNITY OF THE THREE ARMED FORCES. ONE SENIOR NAVY SOURCE EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT'S CONTINUED SUB¹ORDINATION TO THE JUNTA OF THE THREE COMMANDERS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE CONTINUING COHESION AND UNITY OF THE THREE ARMED FORCES (I.E. THE NEW PRESIDENT, IN HIS SEARCH FOR NEW SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE NATION, CAN NOT MOVE ~~ANY~~ AHEAD --

~~ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME SOURCES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE JUNTA IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING~~

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OR, AT LEAST, ~~TEEE~~ TOO FAR AHEAD -- OF THE CONSENSSES IN THE RANKS OF THE SENIOR MILITARY AS REFLECTED IN THE POSITIONS OF THE JUNTA).

HYPOTHESES B: THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POWERS OF GOVERNMENT AMONG THE THREE SERVICES. ACCORDING TO THIS VERSION, THE DELAY OCCURRED BECAUSE OF THE NAVY'S HARD PUSH FOR A GREATER ROLE (I.E. POSITIONS AND OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITY) WITHIN ~~KE~~ THE GOVERNMENT. ALLEGEDLY, THE NAVY INSISTED ON GETTING BACK ~~KE~~ THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHICH IT LOST TO THE AIR FORCE IN LATE 1978. THE ARMY, ACCORDING TO THIS LINE OF SPECULATION, MAY NOT HAVE DONE TOO WELL QUANTITATIVELY IN THE BARGAINING FOR OVERSIGHT OF THE MINISTRIES, HAVING TO BE SATISFIED WITH ROUGHLY A ONE-THIRD SHARE OF THE MINISTRIES -- DISPROPORTIONATE TO ITS SIZE AND IMPORTANCE -- ALTHOUGH IT WILL RETAIN IMPORTANT POSTS SUCH AS INTERIOR. WE DO NOT KNOW AT THIS POINT WHETHER THE NAVY REGAINED THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

8. WE MAY NOT KNOW FOR SOME TIME -- IF EVER -- WHICH OF THESE EXPLANATIONS IS CORRECT; THEY COULD, OF COURSE, BOTH HAVE SUBSTANCE. THE OFFICIAL LINE, FROM THE START, WAS THAT THE CAUSES OF THE DELAY WERE NOT SERIOUS, THAT IT WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF WORKING

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OUT DETAILS, "INSTRUMENTACION." IN FACT, THEY CERTAINLY WERE MORE SERIOUS THAN ADMITTED EVEN IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH US BY SENIOR INTERLOCUTORS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE AT THIS POINT TO SUPPORT THE THESIS THAT THE DIFFERENCES WERE SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS TO UNDERMINE THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF THE REGIME.

RUSER
chw.R.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification

18: 15

IRIS-

CIN 8059

071815Z OCT 80

Declassified Case: DWF 8036
Date: 11-02-2018

TELEGRAM

INDICATE
☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TO12065
EO 12852
TAGS
SUBJECT

ACTION:

INFO:

FROM
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRESCLASSIFICATION
CONFIDENTIALGDS 10/6/86 (RUSER, CLAUS W.) OR-M
PEPR PINS PINT AR US
THE NEW ARGENTINE PRESIDENT

SECSTATE WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS

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CHARGE
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CHRON~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 8059

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 6970; (B) BUENOS AIRES 4984

1. & - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. RETIRED ARMY LGEN ROBERTO VIOLA OCT. 3 WAS DESIGNATED BY HIS FELLOW OFFICERS IN THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, TO TAKE OFFICE, FATE WILLING, ON MARCH 29, 1981. HIS SELECTION MARKS THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE AT THE HELM OF STATE SINCE THE ARGENTINE MILITARY LAUNCHED THEIR "PROCESS OF NATIONAL REORGANIZATION" WITH A COUP IN 1976, OVERTURNING A CONSTITUTIONALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT THAT ~~HAD BEEN~~ ^{HAD BEEN} TAKEN FROM CHAOS TO THE BRINK OF RUIN IN THREE TUMULTUOUS YEARS.

DRAFTED BY:

POL:JKING:SB

DRAFTING DATE

10/6/80

TEL. EXT

278

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY:

CHARGE:CHUSER

CLEARANCES:

POL:TBFRIDMAN
DAO:COL.RPITT
POL:CSCHUBERTfor:
ccs~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CLASSIFICATIONOPTIONAL FORM 153
(Formerly FS 413)
January 1975
Dept of State

THE FIRST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PROCESS, OF COURSE, WAS THE 1978 SELECTION OF LGEN JORGE RAFAEL VIDELA, VIOLA'S OLD FRIEND AND COMRADE-IN-ARMS, FOR A THREE YEAR TERM ENDING SIX MONTHS HENCE, WHEN HE IS SCHEDULED TO TURN OVER THE PRESIDENTIAL SASH TO HIS SUCCESSOR. AGAIN FATE WILLING.

3. THE LONG-ANTICIPATED SELECTION OF VIOLA AND THE ASTUTE ~~MANIPULATION~~ GAME HE PLAYED TO ENSURE IT ARE AMPLY ~~EXPLAINED~~ DESCRIBED IN PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORTING, MOST PARTICULARLY IN THE REFERENCED TELEGRAMS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS DISPATCH IS TO RECAPITULATE WHAT WE KNOW OF GENERAL VIOLA THE MAN AND WHAT WE BELIEVE HIS PRESIDENCY CAN MEAN FOR ARGENTINE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND US INTERESTS THEREIN.

4. THROUGHOUT HIS WHOLE CAREER, INCLUDING THE 1978-80 PERIOD WHEN HE WAS ARMY COMMANDER, VIOLA HAS GENERALLY BEEN OPEN WITH AMERICANS, SYMPATHETIC TO THEIR VIEWS ON WORLD PROBLEMS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE DILEMMA^S AS THE USG HAS FACED IN THE EXERCISE OF POST-WORLD WAR II LEADERSHIP. FRIENDLY, SYMPATHETIC, AND UNDERSTANDING AS THIS CHAIN-SMOKING, AFFABLE STAFF OFFICER-POLITICIAN IS, AND NOTWITHSTANDING INFLUENCES LONG ASSOCIATION WITH AMERICAN MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC OFFICERS MAY HAVE HAD ON HIS PERSONALITY, HE IS ESSENTIALLY A PRODUCT OF THE TRADITION-BOUND CASTE ~~SYSTEM~~ IMBEDDED IN ARGENTINE MILITARY INSTITUTIONS. THE RIGIDITY OF THIS SYSTEM IS THE HARDER FOR ITS TEST IN

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OPTIONAL FORM 103
(Formerly FS-413)
January 1977
Dept. of State

THE ONLY ENGAGEMENT VIOLA AND HIS FELLOW-OFFICERS HAVE EVER FOUGHT, THE "DIRTY WAR" OF TERROR AND COUNTER-TERROR THAT WRACKED THE COUNTRY OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS. THEIR IMPATIENCE WITH HUMANITARIAN OBJECTIONS TO THEIR WAR TACTICS EXPRESSED BY THOSE OUTSIDE THEIR SECRET SOCIETY IS ILL-CONCEALED; IT IS ALMOST COMPREHENSIBLE WHEN IT IS RECOUNTED HOW THEY LOST FRIENDS AND FAMILY, OR HOW THEY THEMSELVES WERE MADE SPECIFIC TARGETS, IN THE LONG NO-QUARTER STRUGGLE. IT WAS THEIR ONLY BLOODING, NOT COUNTING MINOR INTRA-MURAL EPISODES THAT HAVE PUNCTUATED ARGENTINE POLITICS IN THE LAST HALF-CENTURY. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ONE OF THE, AS SUCH, THE DIRTY WAR HAS TO BE RECKONED ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ MOST FORMATIVE EXPERIENCE OF THEIR CAREERS, IF NOT THEIR LIVES.

5. BEING AN ARMY MAN, THERE NEVER WAS ANY REAL DOUBT THAT VIOLA'S SELECTION BY HIS BROTHERS IN ARMS COULD HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGED BY THE NAVY OR AIR FORCE. SOME IN THESE LESSER TWO ELEMENTS OF ARGENTINA'S POWER TRIAD OPPOSED HIS ASCENSION TO THE PRESIDENCY; SEPARATELY OR TOGETHER THEY COULD ONLY HAGGLE FOR SECONDARY PLACES IN A VIOLA GOVERNMENT. BUT EVEN IF THEY ARE TO GET ONLY CRUMBS, THE WEIGHT OF THE ARMY'S SISTER SERVICES HAD TO BE CONSIDERED IN VIOLA'S SELECTION. FROM ALL INDICATIONS DURING THE PROTRACTED MANEUVERING TO SELECT THE NEXT PRESIDENT, A PROCESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE TO PARALLEL IN AWESOME MYSTERY THE SELECTION OF A POPE OR MEXICO'S NEXT

CHIEF OF STATE, THE ARMY CLEARLY TOOK INTO ACCOUNT THE
THE
CLAIMS OF THE OTHER SERVICES FOR A PLACE AT/HEAD
TABLE, NOT BECAUSE THEY HAD A VETO BUT BECAUSE THE
GENERALS HAD GREATER NEED TO PRESERVE "MILITARY UNITY"
WITH THE ADMIRALS AND AIR BRIGADIERS. GRUMBLING AND
RIFTS IN THE RANKS OF THE INDIVIDUAL SERVICES ARE FACTS
OF LIFE COMMON TO ALL THREE. BUT AN OPEN SPLIT AS BE-
TWEEN THEM WOULD HAVE BEEN AN ENGRAVED INVITATION TO
POLITICAL ADEPTS, BOTH IN THE MILITARY AND AMONG CIVILIAN
POLITICIANS, WHO THEMSELVES CONSTITUTE LEGIONS.
EXPLOITATION OF INTER-SERVICE RIVALRY IS NOT ~~TRUE~~ ^{UNIQUE} IN
ARGENTINA; THE EVIL IS RECOGNIZED AND FEARED BY MILITARY
GOVERNMENTS ANYWHERE.

6. AS IMPORTANT TO VIOLA'S DESIGN ON THE PRESIDENCY, IF
NOT MORE SO, THAN DEFLECTING NAVY AND AIR FORCE EFFORTS
AGAINST HIS NOMINATION WAS HIS NEED TO OVERCOME THE
OPPOSITION OF RIVALS AND SEMI-HIDDEN ENEMIES WITHIN THE
ARMY'S GENERAL OFFICER CORPS. EVER SINCE VIDELA WAS
SELECTED PRESIDENT IN 1978, PERHAPS UNDER VIOLA'S MANAGE-
MENT, VIOLA BEGAN ARRANGING HIS OWN SUCCESSION; OUR
READERS ALREADY HAVE BEEN TREATED TO TOO MUCH OF THE
FLORENTINE POLITICS INVOLVED IN THAT THREE-YEAR CAMPAIGN,
BUT IT IS PERTINENT TO PERSPECTIVE AND SO WILL BE RE-
VIEWED BRIEFLY HERE. THE CONTEST PITTED THE SO-CALLED
MODERATES--VIOLA, VIDELA AND THEIR LIKE WHO HAVE WORKED

?
[QUIETLY FOR A MORE OPEN (BUT NOT TOO OPEN) SOCIETY--
AGAINST THE UNCOMPROMISING ANTI-DEMOCRATS NATURALLY
TERMED THE HARDLINERS. HERE LAY THE ESSENTIAL UNRE-
SOLVED QUESTION OF THE 1976 COUP: WERE THE ARMY HARD-
LINERS, THE ARGENTINE CROMWELLS, TO FASTEN ON TO THE
COUNTRY AN INFLEXIBLE REGIME INTOLERANT OF THE MEREST
DEMURE, OR WERE THE MODERATES TO PREVAIL IN LETTING
MORE FRESH AIR INTO THE CLOISTERED RECESSES OF MILITARY
GOVERNMENT.

7. THE OUTCOME OF THIS LONG SHADOWY DUEL WAS IN FAVOR
OF VIOLA AND LIKEMINDED OFFICERS WHO ARE PERSUADED, WE
ARE TOLD, THAT ONLY A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO PUBLIC
AFFAIRS CAN PREVENT INCREASING MILITARY UNPOPULARITY
FROM BECOMING EXPLOSIVE. WHAT THIS TRANSLATES INTO
AFTER VIOLA'S ASSUMPTION OF POWER WILL BE A SUBJECT OF
GENERALIZED PUBLIC SPECULATION AND INTENSE PRIVATE-
INTEREST JOCKEYING UNTIL AND SURELY BEYOND THE EVENT
SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MARCH 29. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE DELAY
IN ANNOUNCING VIOLA'S DESIGNATION WILL IMPORTANTLY
AFFECT THIS JOCKEYING OR ITS OUTCOME.

8. UNDOUBTEDLY THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF ALL THIS INTEREST
WILL NARROW NOT SO MUCH UPON ECONOMY MINISTER MARTINEZ
DE HOZ HIMSELF, AS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS OR SO, BUT
ON THE FUTURE OF THE POLICIES OF ECONOMIC SQUEEZE AND
STRUCTURAL SHAKEOUT ASSOCIATED WITH HIS NAME.

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS ON THIS SCORE WILL BE DULY REPORTED, SO IT IS NOT NECESSARY HERE TO PREFIGURE THEM. IT IS ENOUGH TO SAY THAT ON THE ECONOMIC PLANE THE VAUNTED, OR FEARED, FLEXIBILITY OF VIOLA WILL BE PROBED AND ANALYSED FROM ALL QUARTERS FOR THE NEXT COMING WHILE.

9. BECAUSE MONEY AND FINANCIAL SECURITY ARE THE AVERAGE ARGENTINE'S FIRST CONCERN IT SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING, IN A COUNTRY WHERE ECONOMIC FORECASTS AND PESO EXCHANGE RATES ARE COMMON FARE FOR EVERYDAY CONVERSATION, THAT VIOLA'S ECONOMIC POLICY WILL HOLD WIDEST ATTENTION. NEXT IN ORDER OF PRIORITY INTEREST WILL BE THE FUTURE CONFIGURATION OF THE ARGENTINE POLITICAL SYSTEM. THE MILITARY HAS STATED IT WILL RULE AS LONG AS NECESSARY TO BUILD A HEALTHY ECONOMY AND A SECURE DEMOCRACY. THE POLITICIANS ARE DEMANDING THAT VIOLA BE THE LAST MILITARY PRESIDENT.

10. THE MILITARY'S PLANS AND THE POLITICIANS' AMBITIONS OBSTENSIBLY COME TOGETHER IN THE "DIALOGUE" IN WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FORMER AND THE LATTER COME TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE NATION'S BODY POLITIC. THE FIRST ROUND--NOW UNDERWAY FOR NEARLY A YEAR--IS AIMED AT HAMMERING OUT A LAW THAT WILL ALLOW THE NATION'S PARTIES TO ELECT NEW LEADERSHIP AND BEGIN TO FUNCTION NORMALLY. BUT FOR ALL THE TALK THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE, THE "DIALOGUE" HAS NOT EVEN BEGUN TO COME TO GRIPS WITH

[THE CRITICAL ISSUE OF ARGENTINE POLITICS: WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH THE PERONISTS. STILL THE LARGEST POLITICAL FORCE IN THE COUNTRY AND THE LIKELY WINNER OF ANY FREE ELECTION, PERONISM LIES ACROSS VIOLA'S FUTURE JUST AS SURELY AS DOES THE COST OF ~~KMM~~ LIVING. PERONISM WILL NOT GO AWAY--OR EASILY BE TAMED TO THE MILITARY'S TASTES--AND VIOLA WILL BE CAUGHT BETWEEN THE MILITARY WHO WISH IT WOULD AND THE POLITICIANS WHO KNOW IT WON'T.

11. YET AS EVER, THE MOST INVETERATE OPTIMISTS WILL ADMIT THAT THE EVENTS SINCE 1976 MAY HAVE MADE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE MILITARY AND THEIR CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS TO ACCEPT THE NOTION MANY OFFICERS WOULD REGARD AS INANE-- THAT THEY MUST TURN THE COUNTRY BACK TO THE INEPT AND CORRUPT POLITICIANS (NEVER MIND THEIR OWN PECULATIONS, WHICH ARE EASILY RATIONALIZED AS THEIR DUE, OR SIMPLY NOT TALKED ABOUT AT ALL). THAT KIND OF SOLID DETERMINATION AMONG THE SOLDIERS CAN ONLY BE OVERCOME BY A STRONGER DETERMINATION IN THE FORM OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS, ADROITLY DEVELOPED AND GUIDED BY SOME NEW LEADER, NOT YET ON THE SCENE. AND IT IS HERE, SAY THE OPTIMISTS, THAT THE FLEXIBILITY AND INTELLIGENCE OF GENERAL VIOLA WILL BE DECISIVE AT SOME OPPORTUNE CONJUNCTION OF POLITICAL FORCES. YET EVEN THE OPTIMISTS WONDER, IF SUCH A HAPPY OUTCOME DOES NOT LIE ~~TOO FAR~~ ^{WHETHER} DOWN THE ROAD, ~~XXXX~~ THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE MAY HOLD ONLY MORE POLITICAL DISORDER OR UPHEAVAL.

12. GIVEN THE KING-SIZE NATURE OF ARGENTINA'S UNRESOLVED AND REEMERGENT POLITICAL-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE VIOLA GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST WILL BE ONLY SECONDARILY ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS. A PROVISIO MUST BE THAT THERE IS NO RECURRENCE OF THE BEAGLE CHANNEL WAR SCARE OF LAST YEAR OR SOME OTHER FOREIGN DISTRACTION WHICH NATIONALIST TUB-THUMPERS CAN SEIZE UPON OUT OF PURE PATRIOTISM, IN PURSUIT OF THEIR OWN NARROW ENDS OR JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT. YET, EVEN THOUGH NOT ON THE FIRST PLANE OF NATIONAL CONCERN THERE ARE MATTERS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE IN THE EYES OF VIOLA AND HIS ASSOCIATES WHERE THE COUNTRY'S INTERESTS ARE TO BE DEFENDED AND ADVANCED. THE MAJOR ISSUES HERE, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS, ARE WELL KNOWN AND NEED NOT BE REHEARSED HERE. BUT TWO ~~bear special watch~~ BEAR SPECIAL WATCH
THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF ARGENTINA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND WHETHER HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENTS WHICH VIOLA DID MUCH TO BRING ABOUT AS ARMY CINC CAN BE SUSTAINED. NOR SHOULD WE PASS OVER WITH INDULGENCE ARGENTINA'S SCHIZOID APPROACH TO WORLD AFFAIRS, IN WHICH THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION ARE EQUALLY CENSURED WHILE ARGENTINA PANDERS TO THIRD WORLD OPINION. THE OTHER BILATERAL ISSUES WE HAVE BELABORED WITH THEM ARE TRANSITORY. WE WOULD ~~not~~ VENTURE TO GUESS, IF VIOLA PROVES MORE FLEXIBLE THAN HIS PREDECESSOR AS ARTICULATE ARGENTINES HOPE, THAT OUR

CONCENTRATION ON MAJOR ISSUES WOULD FIND HIS GOVERNMENT LESS OBDURATE ON MATTERS THAT OVER THE LONG-TERM FUTURE REALLY COUNT FOR BOTH OF US.

13. SO NOW THE COUNTRY SETTLES DOWN TO LIVE WITH TWO PRESIDENTS OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, UNTIL VIOLA IS SWORN IN BY HIS COMRADES. HE PRESENTLY SHOULD BE PUTTING TOGETHER HIS ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM AND PLANNING HIS FIRST MOVES, NOT UNIMPORTANTLY INCLUDING A VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN NOVEMBER. VIDELA FOR HIS PART MUST BE VIEWED NOT SIMPLY AS AN OUTGOING PRESIDENT WHOSE TURN IS OVER AND WHO WILL NOT BE HEARD OF AGAIN. ~~ONE OF THE GUIDING STARS~~ ~~BASED IN~~ OF THE "DIALOGUE" MAY BE A HOPE, HOWEVER FORLORN, THAT A MILITARY-GUIDED POPULAR MOVEMENT WILL EMERGE AND CAN AT LEAST COOPT, IF IT CANNOT FINALLY PUT AN END TO, PERONISM AS THE NATION'S POLITICAL CORE. TO HEAD THAT MOVEMENT AND OFFER HIMSELF TO THE ELECTORATE AS A CANDIDATE IN SOME FUTURE RETURN TO DEMOCRACY, AGAIN POSSIBLY ARRANGED BY PRESIDENT VIOLA, MIGHT WELL BE EX-PRESIDENT VIDELA. BUT THAT IS ANOTHER STORY WHOSE DEVELOPMENT IS HIDDEN FROM US BY A COMPLEX SET OF SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS THAT STILL AWAIT DEFINITION.

RUSER


~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Classification

OPTIONAL FORM 152
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January
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